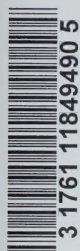


CA20N  
Z1  
-1993  
1022



Government  
Publications

Submission to the Royal  
Commission on Learning





CA20N  
Z1  
-1993  
L022

Government  
Publications

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AGENCY**

**Submission to the Royal Commission on Learning**

Policy and Research Department  
February 1994

AYJ-337/

3081-537



February 2, 1994

Ms Monique Begin  
Mr. Gerry Caplan  
Co-Chairs  
Royal Commission on Learning  
101 Bloor Street West, 13th Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 1P7

Dear Ms Begin and Mr. Caplan:

**Re: Submission to the Royal Commission on Learning**

Your valuable inquiry into the future of elementary and secondary school education in Ontario presents us with the opportunity to offer some recommendations related to occupational health and safety (OHS) education. These recommendations would specifically apply to two aspects of the Commission's mandate, ***Program and Vision***.

We appreciate that the Commission's terms of reference incorporate a recognition of the critical role of the elementary and secondary school system in preparing young people for the workforce. Providing them with the education necessary to protect themselves, their co-workers, or their future employees from injury and illness is an essential component of this preparation.

In this submission, we recommend elementary and secondary school curriculum development to enhance occupational health and safety education in academic as well as technical and business program areas. We recommend that a minimum amount of OHS instruction become a requirement for Ontario secondary school graduation. We also recommend that teachers be sufficiently trained to educate students in OHS.

**The Workplace Health and Safety Agency and Its Mandate**

The Agency was established by amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act in 1990 and gained official status on January 1, 1991. It is a bipartite organization of labour and management which reports to the legislature through the Minister of Labour. Its 18-member Board of Directors comprises an equal number of labour and management representatives. The Agency has a leading role in training and educating workplace parties in health and safety matters. The Agency's primary mandate is to:

February 2, 1986

The Honorable  
The Deputy  
Minister  
Health Canada  
101 Main Street West, 18th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 1P7

Dear Mr. Babin and Mr. Gosselin:

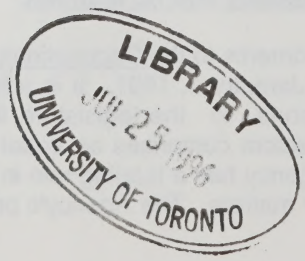
Re: Submission to the Royal Commission on Learning

Your volume clearly sets the stage of a study and analysis of the learning process in Canada. It is an excellent contribution to the knowledge of the learning process and its importance in the development of the individual and the nation. The Commission's mandate, Program and Vision, specifically apply to the subject of the Commission's mandate, Program and Vision.

We appreciate that the Commission's focus is on the learning process and its importance in the development of the individual and the nation. We are pleased to see that the Commission is taking a broad view of the learning process and its importance in the development of the individual and the nation. We are pleased to see that the Commission is taking a broad view of the learning process and its importance in the development of the individual and the nation.

In this submission, we recommend elementary and secondary school education to be restructured to reflect the needs of the 21st century. We recommend that the curriculum be revised to reflect the needs of the 21st century. We recommend that the curriculum be revised to reflect the needs of the 21st century.

The Honorable Health and Safety Minister and the Honorable Minister of Education



The Agency was established by the Government of Ontario in 1985 and is responsible for the development and management of the health and safety program. The Agency is responsible for the development and management of the health and safety program. The Agency is responsible for the development and management of the health and safety program.

- develop standards for the certification of members of health and safety committees and other workers;
- establish and administer the certification process;
- promote public awareness of occupational health and safety;
- provide funding for occupational health and safety research;
- develop an accreditation program for employers who operate successful health and safety programs and policies;
- provide advice on matters related to occupational health and safety; and
- develop and deliver educational programs and contribute to the development of safety programs by other institutions.

One of the Agency's major responsibilities is to fund and oversee the operations of a network of occupational health and safety delivery organizations (HSDOs). Together, these delivery organizations employ more than 600 people and offer in excess of 500 health and safety programs.

### **The Problem: Young Workers at Risk**

Many young workers are secondary school students working in part-time jobs. Others are recent graduates or are among the 25% of the school population who leave school before graduating. These young workers make up a significant portion of the Ontario workforce. In 1993, an estimated 740,830 individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 participated in the total Ontario workforce of approximately 4.8 million. Of these young workers, 303,000 were full-time students employed in part-time positions during the fall and winter school terms. This figure increases by approximately 55% in the summer months, as students secure summer or permanent employment.

A significant portion of these young workers enter high-risk occupations such as the service, manufacturing and agricultural industries, with little or no skills training, and even less health and safety training. In many cases, these workers are unsupervised and are uninformed about worker rights and responsibilities. They are employed in jobs which require them to use hazardous equipment or materials, such as chain saws, compactors, conveyer belts, and power lines. Inadequate training has led to preventable and tragic injury, illness and death.

Examples of some preventable tragedies have been documented by the Agency in the process of developing a video on health and safety and young workers. These include:



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761118494905>



- . A 14 year old convenience store employee died in an accident while operating the store's basement conveyer belt.
- . While working late at night with a woodworking company, a young boy put his hand through a saw. This accident left this teenager permanently disabled, coping with life with one hand.
- . A 16 year old department store employee's upper body was crushed while trying to clear a compactor machine. This young boy sustained injuries to his head, neck and chest. After 2 1/2 months and almost complete recovery, he was back at work in the same job using the same compactor.

In each of these cases, insufficient health and safety training was a major factor associated with the accident.

According to Ontario Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) statistics, young workers between the ages of 15 and 24 sustained 19,932 lost-time injuries in 1992. This accounted for 14.6% of the total lost-time injury claims. Moreover, a 1989 study (based on 1987 data) conducted by the Industrial Accident Prevention Association, suggested that youth aged 15-19 comprised 3% of workers in the manufacturing sector, but accounted for 5% of the reported injuries. In 1987, the injury frequency rate for the 15-19 age group in the manufacturing sector was approximately 14 per 100 workers, compared to approximately 9 per 100 for all age groups.

### **Current Efforts: Programs Developed by the Agency's Delivery Organizations**

For many workers, elementary and secondary school education represents the only formal training they will receive before entering potentially dangerous jobs.

Recognizing this fact, Ontario's health and safety delivery organizations have developed programs and delivered training to assist teachers in educating secondary school students in the basics of occupational health and safety. A brief overview of programs developed by two of these organizations is provided below.

***The Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA)*** serves 65,000 employers in the manufacturing and retailing sectors. The IAPA has developed a student safety awareness program entitled "C.L.A.S.S.", and has provided presentations and training materials to the secondary school teachers and students since 1987. Several programs are available, such as Safety At Work, a training package containing teachers' and students' guides, and a video. This program is designed for young workers aged 15 to 24 and students in Grades 11 and 12, and provides an overview of legal rights, responsibilities and procedures; hazard awareness and accident investigation; ergonomics, material handling and back care; and safe work practices. Another training





package called Safety in Your Lifestyle, containing teachers' and participants' books, is targeted to Grades 9 and 10 students and deals with safety at home and at work; sports and recreation; and health care. An additional program entitled Safety: Getting the Hang of It is designed for new employees and covers personal safety, materials handling, fire prevention, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), and Joint Health and Safety Committees. This program includes videos, and facilitators' and participants' guides. These materials are available to teachers through a province-wide mailing list and IAPA volunteers are available at teachers' requests to provide seminars or presentations.

***The Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC)*** is a labour organization mandated to develop and provide occupational health and safety leadership, training and programs that meet workers' needs. The WHSC has developed the "New Worker Awareness Program", suitable for two delivery approaches: a forty-minute presentation to be conducted in an "assembly type format", and another presentation of similar length which can be used either as a classroom follow-up to the presentation, or as part of the health and safety training required for co-op students. The assembly presentation consists of a verbal presentation, the distribution of print material, a video or film, and a question and answer period. This presentation deals with subjects such as lock-out and confined spaces; rights and responsibilities of the workplace parties; and an overview of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The second package builds on information communicated in the assembly. Using group discussion, case studies, overheads, and participant worksheets students gain a further understanding of the hazards they may face and their rights and responsibilities when it comes to health and safety on the job. Both packages include detailed presenter notes to help the teacher/presenter deliver the information and answer student questions. Both cover a variety of sectors and hazards so they can be adapted to suit any audience. The assembly package including handouts and video is available in French and English. The classroom package is currently available in English, a French version will be available shortly.

The Agency is currently funding a 3-year pilot project by the WHSC and the Ontario Teachers' Federation to deliver this new worker awareness package in Ontario schools. Since February 1993, this program has been delivered to 152 secondary schools.

While many thousands of students each year receive some OHS instruction utilizing materials or programs of Agency system organizations, these programs are still only reaching a fraction of the school population. One of the Agency's goals, therefore, is increased utilization of these programs by the school system and enhanced OHS training at all levels. The Commission can play an important role in supporting these goals.





## **Recommendations for Reform**

We believe that OHS education must be required in both elementary and secondary school curricula. Enhanced OHS training can help to reduce injury, illness and death, and would result in many other direct and indirect benefits, such as lowered compensation costs, greater productivity, and increased wellbeing.

We recognize that current Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines make provisions for varying levels of occupational health and safety instruction, particularly in the technological, co-operative and business programs. Information is lacking, however, that would allow us to determine how many

teachers follow these guidelines, the quality of this instruction, and its effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many teachers do not feel they have sufficient training to provide OHS education. The following recommendations are offered in the hopes of improving the quality and availability of OHS education for all students.

### **1. Mandatory Instruction in Occupational Health and Safety: Minimum Requirements**

Students need to understand the importance of occupational health and safety training in preparing them for their future roles in our society. A specified minimum of such training and incorporation of health and safety into required learning outcomes would emphasize the significance of this education. This requirement would also ensure the delivery of occupational health and safety instruction to all students in Ontario schools.

#### **Recommendation #1:**

**The Agency recommends that a specified minimum of occupational health and safety instruction become a requirement for secondary school graduation, and that occupational health and safety awareness be recognized as an essential learning outcome.**

### **2. Curriculum Development**

Instruction in occupational health and safety should be introduced at the elementary school level and built upon throughout the secondary school curriculum. We believe it is critical that this instruction be delivered to all students, whether their program focus is predominately academic, artistic, business or technical. The theoretical and practical skills gained through this instruction will help students accept responsibility for preventing workplace hazards, whether they ultimately serve in a professional, administrative, trades, service, or technical capacity. A fundamental grounding in the principles of occupational





health and safety would be retained by students their entire working lives and has great potential to improve health and safety in our schools, workplaces, homes and communities.

The Agency believes that OHS curriculum guidelines should be developed in collaboration with OHS specialists in the Agency system.

### **Recommendation #2:**

#### **The Agency recommends that:**

- a) **occupational health and safety instruction be incorporated into the elementary and secondary school curricula.**
- b) **instruction to students at the elementary level should begin in Grade 4 and encompass general health and safety principles applicable to the home, school and workplace. From Grades 9 and up, this instruction should become more specific to the student's program area.**
- c) **all secondary level instruction should include the fundamentals of:**
  - **occupational health and safety law;**
  - **roles and responsibilities of the workplace parties;**
  - **recognition and control of hazards;**
  - **bipartite processes and institutions;**
  - **joint health and safety committees.**
- d) **students preparing for specific trades or work experience must also receive instruction in the recognition and control of hazards specific to their work.**
- e) **enhanced OHS curriculum guidelines should be developed in consultation with OHS specialists in the Agency system.**

### **3. Teacher Education**

As described above, organizations in the Agency system have developed a number of programs to assist teachers with student OHS instruction. Although the HSDOs are dedicated to directly delivering their programs to as many students as possible, the primary responsibility for delivery of OHS training must fall to teachers in our school system. Teachers will therefore need to be sufficiently trained to deliver these OHS programs to all students. We believe that the Agency system organizations could play





a major role in developing and delivering programs to upgrade teachers' capacity to teach OHS.

**Recommendation #3:**

**That teachers be trained through the teachers' colleges and professional development programs to deliver enhanced curricula in OHS.**

We look forward to your report, and to continuing opportunities to work closely with organizations and individuals in the education system. We trust that through such co-operative efforts we will better prepare our students for the workplace and provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent workplace injury and illness.

Yours very truly,

Paul K. Forder  
Vice-Chair and Joint CEO  
Labour

Robert D. McMurdo  
Vice-Chair and Joint CEO  
Management

Copy: Honourable Dave Cooke, Minister of Education  
Honourable Robert Mackenzie, Minister of Labour

Enclosure: Workplace Health and Safety Agency brochures

mal/cmd















14607  
06-10